



A Critical Discourse Analysis of Waters War in Social Media

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تحليل ناقد لخطاب حرب المياه في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي

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Abstract

Water is a crucial resource for life; however, its uneven distribution and increasing demand have led to significant conflicts among nations, often referred to as 'water wars'. The study aims to investigate the types of transitivity processes most frequently used in the politicians' utterances regarding the water war between Iraq and Turkey. Additionally, it seeks to analyze how positive self-representation and negative other-representation are uncovered at the micro level in these utterances. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the study analyses two purposefully selected reports from Al Arabiya News and Reuters through critical discourse analysis. It adopts an eclectic model, combining Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional framework with Van Dijk's (2000) ideological square to explore how political discourse shapes ideological narratives. The findings highlight a predominant focus on material processes, indicating a strong emphasis on actions and decisions related to water management. Furthermore, the findings showed that Iraqi and Turkish politicians construct ideological representations by emphasizing the positive aspects of their group while minimizing their flaws and highlighting the negative aspects of the opposing group. These insights highlight the crucial role of discourse in shaping public perceptions and political narratives, underscoring the importance of more equitable and transparent communication in managing water conflicts. Future research should incorporate a multimodal discourse analysis, including visual and multimedia elements, to examine their role in the ideological framing.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, news reports, textual analysis, Van Dijk's ideological square, waters war

المستخلص

الماء مورد حيوي للحياة؛ ومع ذلك، فإن توزيعه غير المتكافئ والطلب المتزايد عليه قد أدّى إلى نزاعات كبيرة بين الدول، غالباً ما يُشار إليها باسم "حرب المياه". تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء أكثر أنواع عمليات العبور (Transitivity Processes) شيوعاً في تصريحات السياسيين المتعلقة بحرب المياه بين العراق وتركيا. كما تسعى إلى تحليل كيفية الكشف عن التمثيل الإيجابي للذات والتمثيل السلبي للآخر على المستوى الدقيق في هذه التصريحات. وباستخدام منهج وصفي نوعي، حلت الدراسة تقريرين تم اختيارهما بشكل مقصود من قناة العربية الإخبارية ووكالة رويترز من خلال تحليل الخطاب النقدي. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة نموذجاً انتقائياً يجمع بين الإطار ثلاثي الأبعاد لفيركلاف (1995) والمربع الأيديولوجي لفان دايك (2000) لاستكشاف كيفية تشكيل الخطاب السياسي للسرديات الأيديولوجية. وأظهرت النتائج تركيزاً كبيراً على العمليات المادية، مما يشير إلى وجود تأكيد قوي على الأفعال والقرارات المتعلقة بإدارة المياه. علاوة على ذلك، بيّنت النتائج أن السياسيين العراقيين والأتراك يبنون تمثيلات أيديولوجية من خلال إبراز الجوانب الإيجابية لمجموعتهم مع التقليل من عيوبها، وتسليط الضوء على الجوانب السلبية للمجموعة المقابلة. وتبرز هذه النتائج الدور الحاسم للخطاب في تشكيل تصورات الجمهور والسرديات السياسية، مؤكدة على أهمية وجود تواصل أكثر عدلاً وشفافية في إدارة نزاعات المياه. وينبغي على البحوث المستقبلية أن تدمج تحليل الخطاب المتعدد الوسائط، بما في ذلك العناصر المرئية والوسائط المتعددة، لدراسة دورها في التأطير الأيديولوجي.

الكلمات المفتاحية : تحليل الخطاب النقدي، الإطار ثلاثي الأبعاد لفيركلاف، التقارير الإخبارية، التحليل النصي، المربع الأيديولوجي لفان دايك، حرب المياه

Introduction

Water is essential for the existence of life; without it, life on Earth would be impossible. The availability of freshwater plays a crucial role in food and energy production, industrial development, and human survival. However, freshwater resources are limited and unevenly distributed across different regions and periods. They increasingly face issues of contamination, over-extraction, and mismanagement. These challenges, combined with rising populations and expanding economies, intensify pressure on water resources, even in areas previously considered water-rich. This situation increases the potential for conflicts over water resources, as such conflicts have historically been associated with what is commonly referred to as the 'waters war' (Woolwine, 1997). Waters war is a term defined by Turton (2000) to describe conflicts over water resources, particularly in shared river basins or aquifers. These conflicts involve direct engagement between two or more countries, focusing on issues of water access and management (Pradhan, 2017; Undala, 2002). In the Middle East, such conflicts have intensified, particularly between Iraq and Turkey, where disputes over the Tigris and Euphrates rivers have long been a source of tension and political friction.

In parallel with the rise of such conflicts, social media has emerged as a distinct domain within the media landscape. It has become deeply ingrained as a powerful tool for influencing individuals and transforming how they access information (Walther et al., 2010). According to Tutent (2008), social media platforms are interactive, dynamic, and participatory online communities that empower users to publish, curate, evaluate, create, and engage with online content. Consequently, social media has become a key platform for political communication

between Iraq and Turkey regarding the disputes over the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This political communication is published as news reports. Accordingly, news reports derived from media channels reflect social practices and have become significant subjects of discourse analysis (Guo, 2011). They present actual events, incorporate diverse perspectives from various sources, and strive to minimize journalists' personal opinions and ideological biases (Kang & Li, 2018). Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model and Van Dijk's (2000) ideological square are utilized to analyze the data. Unlike interpretive approaches, CDA aligns more closely with qualitative designs and is highly applicable to the context of 'waters war'. CDA, as noted by Fairclough (1995, p. 132), is the study of often opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices, events and texts, and broader social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.

Although 'waters war' has been examined from political and economic perspectives, little attention has been paid to how it is constructed discursively in social media through CDA. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how political discourse surrounding the water war between Iraq and Turkey is ideologically shaped and represented in selected social media news reports. The study is essential for researchers in the field of CDA, as it demonstrates a practical application of Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model and Van Dijk's (2000) ideological square in analyzing political discourse concerning the waters war. It offers insights into how politicians strategically use

language to construct ideological representations on social media platforms. Furthermore, it is valuable for the general public, mainly social media users and policy observers, as it raises awareness about the underlying ideologies embedded in political discourse related to the water war between Iraq and Turkey. The study aims to investigate the types of transitivity processes most frequently used in politicians' utterances regarding the water war between Iraq and Turkey. Additionally, it seeks to analyze how positive self-representation and negative other-representation are uncovered at the micro level in these utterances, as presented in selected social media reports. To achieve these aims, the study addresses the following research questions: 1. What are the types of transitivity processes that are most frequently used in the politicians' utterances regarding the water war between Iraq and Turkey? And 2. How are positive self-representation and negative other-representation uncovered in politicians' utterances at the micro level regarding the water war between Iraq and Turkey in the selected social media reports?

Literature Review

Waters War

The concept 'waters war' refers to conflicts between nations or states over access to freshwater resources (Adam, 2020). This concept gained prominence in the late 1990s, likely due to Serageldin's assertion in 1995 that, "If the wars of this century were fought over oil, the wars of the next century will be fought over water unless we change our approach to managing this precious and vital resource" (Serageldin, 1995, p. 56). Waters war represents a critical area of study, characterized by the complex interplay of political, socioeconomic, and environmental factors. It describes the intense international political tensions and disputes that arise from competition for

access to water resources (Petersen-Perlman et al., 2017). Swain (2015) defines waters war as conflicts between two or more states over limited water resources, particularly concerning the allocation of international rivers. These conflicts typically arise from a combination of factors, including population growth, climate change, and uneven economic development. Furthermore, the increasing demand of water for agricultural, industrial, and domestic purposes places additional strain on these shared resources, intensifying tensions among the involved states.

One of the significant water disputes is between Iraq and Turkey over the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers. These two essential rivers, which originate in Turkey, are crucial for the livelihoods of millions of people in both countries. This geographical reality positions Turkey as the riparian hegemony, enjoying a dominant upstream status, while Iraq is situated as downstream and heavily reliant on the water that flows from Turkey (Al-Ansari, 2016). In the recent decades, Turkey has undertaken significant dam initiatives, particularly the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP). This project seeks to exploit the hydroelectric potential of the region's rivers and enhance irrigation within Turkey. However, it has resulted in serious repercussions for Iraq, as water flow to the country has decreased by approximately 80% since 1975. This decline has been further intensified by the construction of the Ilisu Dam, which is anticipated to further reduce water flows to Iraq. The resulting decrease in water supply poses significant challenges for Iraq's agricultural sector, leading to increased desertification and salinisation of once-fertile lands. This situation makes it difficult for farmers to sustain their crops and livelihoods. Consequently, these environmental changes not only threaten

food security in Iraq but also exacerbate economic difficulties and heighten tensions between Iraq and Turkey (Chibani, 2023).

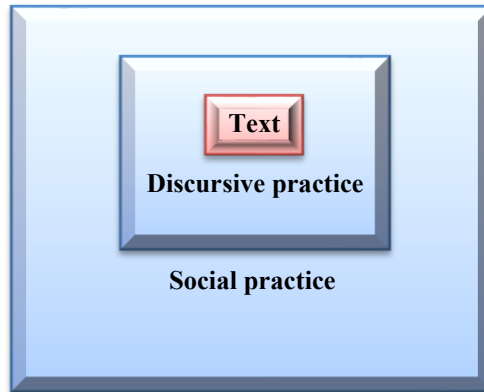
Critical Discourse Analysis: An Overview

CDA is a comprehensive approach that is not confined to a specific discourse, topic, or medium. While it employs multiple methodologies, some analysts may prefer certain approaches based on their specific interests or research objectives. Generally, critical discourse analysts focus on how power dynamics are reproduced through discourse and how these power relations can be challenged. As Van Dijk (2009, cited in Khalil & Ali, 2023) notes, their interest lies in "the discursive (re)production of power abuse and the resistance against such domination. They share a common emphasis on exploring how language is utilised to support, reinforce, and advance the interests, perspectives, and values of those in positions of power." According to Richardson (2007), CDA is a theory and a methodology examining how individuals and organisations use language. Similarly, Widdowson (2007, p. 33) describes CDA as "an approach that involves the use of language to exercise socio-political power, convey ideology, and promote social beliefs" (cited in Farhan, 2024). Fairclough (1992, p. 312) emphasizes that CDA serves practical purposes, including the examination of the social functions of language, the analysis of linguistic processes within their social contexts, and the uncovering of underlying ideological and political influences. Consequently, CDA aims to reveal the implicit and concealed relations of power, subordination, inequality, and other ideological constructs embedded within texts. This analytical approach encourages readers to perceive reality through a specific, shaped, or biased perspective conveyed by the discourse (cited in Nasser & Khalil, 2020).

Fairclough's Framework of CDA: Dialectal Relational Approach

Fairclough (1995, as cited in Ahmed & Ibrahim, 2018) introduces a framework known as a three-dimensional analytical approach, which emphasizes the understanding of language as both discourse and social practice, as well as the interconnections among language, ideology, and identity. This framework comprises three dimensions of discourse, these dimensions can be conceptualized as follows: (i) text analysis, whether spoken or written; (ii) discursive practice, which involves the production and interpretation of texts; and (iii) Social practice. The following figure describes Fairclough's (1995) model.

Figure. 1 *Fairclough's (1995) Model*



The present study is limited to the application of the first stage, i.e., textual analysis due to its significance and importance to the analysis part of the study.

Text Analysis (description): In the description stage, the focus is on the formal characteristics of the text. This stage involves a thorough and systematic analysis of linguistic features, including vocabulary choices (diction), grammatical elements (such as passivization and transitivity), and the overall structure of the text. To enhance understanding of this stage, Fairclough provides

key questions that concentrate on vocabulary, grammar, and text structure. The vocabulary section examines the selection of different words; the grammar section pertains to grammatical characteristics, which are related to Halliday's systemic-functional grammar (SFG); and the textual structures section addresses the overall structure of the discourse (Fairclough, 1989). The researchers of the study will explain the grammatical level in detail since it is the level used to achieve the aim of the study.

Grammar

According to Halliday's (2014), the grammatical level consists of two dimensions: transitivity and modality. This study will focus exclusively on transitivity, utilizing Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) SFG as its framework. Transitivity analysis is a crucial concept in discourse, as emphasized by Halliday's (2014) SFL. Within this framework, grammar is defined as "a way of understanding the functions that language performs and the choices people make when they speak/write to exchange meaning with readers/listeners" (Young & Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 16). Thompson (2009) describes SFG as a method for analyzing lexical and grammatical choices within the system of wording, providing insights into language use in specific contexts. This framework establishes clear connections between social contexts (including the context of culture and situation), meaning, lexico-grammar, and the resulting text.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 221), the transitivity structure of a clause consists of three experiential components: participant (who and whom), process (what), and circumstance (under what conditions). Participants play a crucial role in any process, with each type of experiential clause typically involving one to three participants. In contrast, circumstances are

generally optional elements of the clause. While participant and process are fundamental, circumstance is considered peripheral. The roles of participants can vary depending on the type of process in which they are involved. To illustrate this, Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) provide a table that outlines the different processes along with the corresponding participant roles associated with each. The process types, as described by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 300), consist of six categories, which are further divided into two types: principal and subsidiary. The principal processes include 'material,' 'mental,' and 'relational,' while the subsidiary processes encompass 'behavioural,' 'verbal,' and 'existential.' This is further illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. *Halliday and Matthiessen, (2014, p. 311): Classification of Transitivity*

| Process Types | Category Meaning | Participants, Directly Involved | Participants, Obliquely Involved |
|--|---|--|--|
| Material: Action Event | Doing Doing Happening | Actor, Goal | Recipient, Client Scope, Initiator Attribute |
| Behavioral | Behaving | Behave | Behavioral |
| Mental: Perception Cognition Desideration Emotion | Sensing Seeing Thinking Wanting Feeling | Senser, Phenomenon | Inducer |
| Verbal | Saying | Sayer, Target | Receiver, Verbiage |
| Relational: Attribution Identification | Being Attributing Identifying | Carrier, Attribute Identified, Identifier Token, Value | Attributor, Beneficiary Assigner |
| Existential | Existing | Existent | |

Van Dijk's (2000) Ideological Square

Van Dijk (2000) emphasises many strategies within ideological schemas that are closely linked to the concept of "Us and Them". This indicates that ideologies operate by categorizing group members and societies into polarized groups (as cited in Abid & Mohammad, 2022). He describes this polarization as "group membership," which involves distinguishing who belongs to "Us" and who belongs to "Them", based on actions, goals, norms, and resources (van Dijk, 2000, p. 43). The strategy of positive self-representation and negative other-representation, commonly referred to as the ideological square, reflects a tendency to portray ourselves positively while depicting others negatively. In order to convey a more nuanced analysis, Van Dijk (2000, p. 44) presents four principles that underpin the ideological communication within discourse. These four principles are as follows:

- Emphasizing the positive aspects of "Us"
- Emphasizing the negative aspects of "Them"
- Overemphasizing the negative aspects of "Us"
- Overemphasizing the positive aspects of "Them"

These four principles constitute the conceptual framework of the ideological square, which can be applied to the analysis of various levels of discourse.

Previous Studies

In 2002, Amery published a study titled **Water Wars in the Middle East: A Looming Threat**, which explores the intricate hydropolitical dynamics between Israel and Lebanon, with a particular emphasis on the tensions surrounding Lebanon's construction of a pump at the Wazzani Spring, a tributary of the Jordan River. This study is contextualized by a backdrop of increasing water scarcity in the region, exacerbated by a

prolonged drought and historical grievances stemming from decades of conflict between the two nations. Amery contends that the potential for war arises not only from the immediate issue of water access but also from a confluence of factors, including mutual distrust, competing developmental needs, and ongoing territorial disputes. His findings suggest that while many water disputes in the Middle East may be resolved peacefully, the convergence of these factors could lead to violent confrontations, thereby threatening political stability in the Middle East. Another study titled **A Legal and Economic Analysis of the Tri-State Water Wars**, conducted by McCord in 2014, examines the ongoing legal disputes among Georgia, Alabama, and Florida regarding the shared water resources of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin. The study aims to explore the politically, economically, and legally significant issues surrounding this conflict. The findings highlight the distinct claims each state has to the water resources, including the growing population of Atlanta, agricultural demands in Georgia, Alabama's nuclear power requirements, and Florida's environmental concerns. This suggests a complex interplay of competing interests that complicates potential resolutions to the water wars. The study by Abdulhusein (2024) titled **A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Iraqi-Turkish Water Dispute in Media** explores how media representations shape public perceptions and policy discussions regarding the Iraqi-Turkish water dispute. The study employs a qualitative discursive methodology, utilising Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) based on Fairclough's (2013) model in conjunction with thematic and framing analysis frameworks developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Entman (1993). The findings indicate that Iraqi media frequently depict Turkey as an aggressor that wields water as a

strategic weapon. In contrast, Turkish media criticize Iraq for its mismanagement and lack of cooperation. These entrenched perspectives serve as barriers to collaborative dialogue, underscoring the influential role of media in perpetuating conflict.

After reviewing the previously mentioned studies, the researcher has noticed that, the concept of "waters war" has been examined from linguistic and non-linguistic perspectives. From a non-linguistic perspective, it has been studied through political (Amery, 2002) and from economic (McCord, 2014), while from a linguistic perspective, it has been analyzed using CDA. As Paltridge (2012, p. 210) suggests, "A further way of using previous research is to carry out a study which uses different discourse data from a previous study, but the same methodology so as to be able to compare and contrast your findings with those of the original study." Following this approach, the current study employs a similar methodology. Still, it uses different data to bridge gaps in the literature by following CDA to examine the concept of 'waters war' in two social media reports. To achieve this, the researcher adopts a descriptive qualitative research design, proposing an eclectic model that combines Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model and Van Dijk's (2000) ideological square to illustrate how politicians employ linguistic processes to construct ideological representations of in-groups and out-groups within the context of waters war.

Method

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994, as cited in Abbas et al., 2024), qualitative research is a method of inquiry that focuses on understanding phenomena within their natural environments. It

seeks to interpret the meanings that individuals attribute to objects and experiences, emphasizing the significance of context and the subjective perspectives of participants. Qualitative research is considered "situationally constrained" because social context significantly influences the meaning of social actions (Neuman, 2014, as cited in Najem & Abbas, 2024).

Data Selected and Descriptive

To ensure the achievement of the research objectives, the selected data must align with the proposed objectives (Abbas, 2020). Mohammed and Abbas (2016) assert that a primary challenge researchers face when conducting a study is the selection of appropriate data. In this study, the researchers purposefully select two relevant news reports posted on Twitter, originally published by Al Arabiya News and Reuters websites. The links to these reports are included in the reference list. These reports are chosen because they meet the following criteria: they are well-suited to the study's primary objective, which is to identify the types of transitivity processes in politicians' statements that contribute to the construction of ideological representations of in-groups and out-groups; they specifically address the issue of waters war between Iraq and Turkey, featuring the statements of politicians from both countries regarding water management access; and they originate from reputable sources known for their accuracy, consistency, and impartiality, as they are not affiliated with Iraq or Turkey, thereby minimizing bias.

Modal of Analysis

The researchers employ an eclectic model that integrates Van Dijk's (2000) ideological square with Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model. These models are particularly relevant for illustrating how politicians utilize linguistic processes to

construct ideological representations of in-groups and out-groups within the context of the waters war. At the macro level, Van Dijk's (2000) model is selected to analyse the construction of ideological representations, while at the micro level, the first component of Fairclough's (1995) model, namely textual analysis, more specifically, the grammatical level, is utilized to uncover the linguistic processes embedded in the politicians' utterances regarding the waters war. This integration allows for a comprehensive analysis using Van Dijk's model to uncover ideological meanings and Fairclough's textual analysis to reveal the linguistic processes that realize those ideologies.

Research Procedures

The researchers follow the procedures, as stated below, to achieve the aim of the study:

- Introducing a theoretical account of what is meant by the main aspects of the study, such as waters war, CDA, and social media.
- Presenting the eclectic model that integrates Van Dijk's (2000) ideological square with Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model.
- Collecting the data, which are two news reports published on Twitter, a social media platform.
- Analyzing the data on two levels, macro and micro.
- Discussing the findings of the study, and
- Concluding and providing some recommendations.

Data Analysis

This section focuses on analyzing the utterances of politicians in four purposefully selected extracts from news reports. Two extracts are taken from a report published by AlArabiya News, and two extracts are from a report published by Reuters.

Report 1 “Facing drought, Iraq asks Turkey to release more water along Tigris, Euphrates rivers”

A Brief Summary of the Report “ Iraq has requested Turkey to increase the water flow from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to address a severe water shortage caused by drought and reduced river levels due to upstream dams. In a videoconference, Iraq’s water minister, Mehdi al-Hamdani, urged Turkey to release more water, and Turkish officials agreed to assess the situation. Tensions remain high as Turkey’s ambassador accused Iraq of mismanaging its water resources, while Iraq contends that Ankara is restricting its water quota.”

Extract 1: Al-Hamdani asked Turkey via videoconference “to re-examine the amounts of water released, in order to allow Iraq to overcome the current water shortage.”

Contextualisation

The whole extract reflects Al-Hamdani’s emphasis on portraying his group positively while depicting the out-group negatively through the use of various linguistic processes. The first one is *the verbal process asked*, positioning *himself* as the sayer, *Turkey* as the receiver, and *to re-examine the amounts of water released* as the verbiage. Al-Hamdani frames Iraq as cooperative and solution-orientated, which aims to prevent water shortages. Simultaneously, he depicts Iraq as a victim in need of assistance from the upstream country, Turkey, while obscuring any internal mismanagement that may contribute to the crisis.

Another linguistic process utilized by Al-Hamdani is *the material process re-examine*, which positions *Turkey* as the implied actor and *the amounts of water released* as the goal. He subtly assigns responsibility for the water shortage to Turkey, urging it to reconsider the amount of water it releases to Iraq. He portrays Turkey as the dominant upstream country with control over shared resources. By presenting the situation in this manner, Al-Hamdani subtly shifts agency to Turkey without making explicit accusations, thereby constructing a narrative in which Turkey's actions are pivotal to Iraq's water crisis. Another *material process* employed by Al-Hamdani is *overcome*, which positions Iraq as the actor and the *current water shortage* as the goal. He depicts Iraq as an active and resilient nation trying to resolve the crisis. However, this action is dependent upon Turkey's cooperation, as it follows the request for Turkey *to re-examine the amounts of water released*. By linking Iraq's ability to address its resource shortages to Turkey's actions, Al-Hamdani subtly assigns responsibility to Turkey, portraying it as the gatekeeper of Iraq's success. This characterization positions Turkey as a powerful upstream actor that controls essential resources, with decisions that directly affect Iraq's well-being. Furthermore, although the statement is indirect and diplomatic, it suggests that Turkey's current behaviour is insufficient or obstructive. While avoiding direct accusations, it still constructs a narrative in which Turkey's action contributes to the problem. Thus, Al-Hamdani reinforces Iraq's status as a vulnerable entity requiring assistance, while simultaneously depicting Turkey as a negligent external entity possessing the capacity to either alleviate or intensify the crisis.

Extract 2: "Eroglu said he would pass on the request to water authorities in Ankara to "increase the amounts of water released in the coming days, according to (Turkey's) available reserves. "

Contextualisation

The entire extract illustrates Eroglu's focus on creating ideological representations that bolster the in-group's image while subtly diminishing the out-group, Iraq, by employing multiple linguistic processes. The first one is ***the verbal process said***, which positions *Eroglu* as the sayer with *he would pass on the request to water authorities in Ankara* as the verbiage. This portrayal presents Eroglu as a transparent and communicative figure, framing Turkish authorities as cooperative in their response to Iraq's demands. ***The material process pass on*** positions *Eroglu* as the actor and *the request* as the goal. Eroglu portrays Turkey in a way that reinforces its bureaucratic authority, centralized decision-making, and control over water resources. At the same time, he subtly distances himself from direct responsibility since he is merely a mediator who passes on the request rather than an autonomous decision-maker. Eroglu subtly depicts Iraq (the out-group) as lacking control and agency, with their position framed as dependent on Turkey's goodwill. Iraq's necessity to make a *request* presents them as passive and reliant, which indirectly suggests a lack of authority and influence over Turkey. This portrayal reinforces a power imbalance, where Iraq is perceived as the weaker entity in need of assistance, while Turkey is positioned as the more powerful entity with the ability to grant or withhold support. Another ***material process*** is used by Eroglu, *increase*, which presents *water authorities* as an implicit actor and *the amount of water released* as the goal. Eroglu positions Turkey as a generous and action-orientated nation that is willing to offer assistance.

However, this generosity is immediately conditioned by the clause *according to Turkey's available reserves*, which strategically mitigates any perception of political reluctance by attributing limitations to the availability of natural resources.

Report 2 “*Turkish dam project threatens rift with Iraq over water shortages*”

A Brief Summary of the Report “*Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi expressed surprise over Turkey's decision to begin filling the Ilisu Dam earlier than the agreed-upon timeline, suggesting that this action may be politically motivated in light of Turkey's upcoming elections on June 24. This development has raised concerns in Iraq, which is already facing a significant water crisis, as approximately 70% of its water resources are derived from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers that flow through Turkey. While Turkey's ambassador emphasized the importance of cooperation and consultation regarding water management, Abadi reassured that his government is actively addressing the water shortage through strategic planning. This includes prioritizing water supply for essential agricultural crops such as wheat and potentially reallocating land use to mitigate water consumption.*”

Extract 1 Al- Abadi' utterance "The Turkish prime minister had promised me they would start filling the dam at the end of June, not the start, so I was surprised to see they started..."

Contextualisation

The whole extract reflects Al-Abadi's emphasis on constructing a polarized representation between the in-group (Iraqi politicians) and the out-group (Turkish politicians) through various linguistic processes. The first one is ***the verbal process***, *promise* which positions *the Turkish prime minister* as the *sayer*, *me (Al-Abadi)* as the *receiver*, and *they would start filling the dam*

at the end of June as the verbiage. Al-Abadi frames the Turkish prime minister as someone who made a commitment, adding weight to the idea that Turkey broke a promise. This places moral responsibility on the Turkish side while portraying himself as someone who trusts and relies on diplomatic assurances, enhancing the Iraqi in-group's image as cooperative and reasonable. The verb *start* represents a **material process**, positioning *they* as the actor and *filling the dam* as the goal of the action. In this way, Al-Abadi portrays the Turkish side (they) as the initiators of a concrete, physical action to fill the dam. He wants to underscore the out-group agency and responsibility for initiating a controversial act. Al-Abadi utilizes **the mental process** *surprised*, which reflects an emotional reaction. In this case, the senser is *I (Al-Abadi)*, and the phenomenon is *to see they started*. He constructs a particular image of himself and his in-group, the Iraqi people, by depicting himself as sincere, emotionally honest, and personally impacted by Turkey's unexpected actions. This portrayal positions him as a trustworthy leader who empathises with his people, thereby reinforcing a sense of unity and shared victimhood. In contrast, the out-group, represented by Turkey, is implicitly depicted as deceptive, aggressive, and untrustworthy. Their sudden and unexplained actions are framed as a betrayal, suggesting a violation of diplomatic norms and a lack of prior agreement.

Extract 2 "We will not take any step without consultation with the neighbouring country on how we can cooperate and provide support during any problem, "Fatih Yildiz told a news conference through an Arabic translator.

Contextualisation

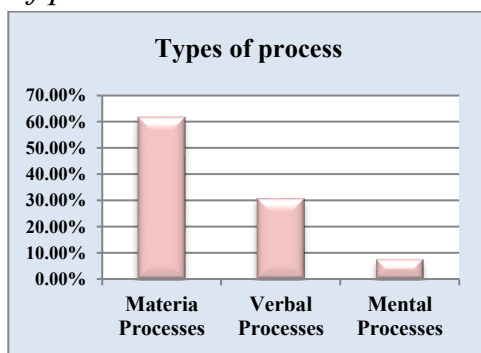
The whole extract reflects Yildiz's emphasis on constructing a positive image of Turkish politicians (in-group) while marginalizing the agency of Iraqi politicians (out-group), through several linguistic processes and modalities. The first one is *the material process take*, positions *we* as the actor and *any step* as the goal, which demonstrates that Turkish politicians are active decision-makers. He portrays them as cautious and deliberate, particularly by including *without consultation*, which suggests they are respectful of their neighbours and not impulsive. Yildiz also employs *the material process cooperate* again, placing *we* as the actor and *support* as the goal of the action. He wants to convey a sense of active engagement, mutual effort, and a willingness to collaborate with Iraq, the neighbouring country. Yildiz's choice of this verb implies openness, diplomacy, and peaceful intentions. He seeks to underscore Turkish politicians' commitment to collaboration rather than unilateral action or dominance. Similarly, *the material process provide* identifies *we* as the actor and *support* as the goal. Yildiz further emphasizes Turkey's helpful and proactive stance, highlighting its generosity and assistance and portraying the Turkish side as ready to offer help during any situation. This depiction presents them as dependable and empathetic actors. Additionally, *the verbal process told* positions Yildiz as the sayer, *a news conference* as the receiver, and *the entire statement* as the verbiage. Yildiz portrays Turkish officials as transparent and communicative, thereby contributing to a positive image.

The overall mentions of the transitivity processes are presented in the table below to illustrate the frequencies and percentages of each.

Table 2. *Types of Processes in the Selected Social Media Reports*

| Types of Process | Freq. | Per. |
|--------------------|-------|------|
| Material Processes | 8 | 61.5 |
| Verbal Processes | 4 | 30.8 |
| Mental Processes | 1 | 7.7 |
| Total | 13 | 100% |

Figure 2. *Types of process in the selected Social Media Reports*



Discussion

Depending on Fairclough's (1995) three dimensional relational model and Van dijk's (2000) ideological square, the researchers identify that the ideological representations are deeply embedded in the language used by politicians regarding waters war. All the studies mentioned in the literature review differ from the current study regarding data type, methodology, and the findings. While Amery (2002) and McCord (2014) addressed the waters war from political and economic perspectives, this study uniquely explores how ideologies are constructed in social media discourse, revealing the micro-level linguistic tools that reflect macro-level political context. The study by Abdulhusein (2024) shares some similarities, particularly in analyzing Iraqi and Turkish media discourses.

However, the current study is distinct in its data and model; it is based on Fairclough's (1995) textual analysis, more specifically, the grammatical level and Van Dijk's (2000) ideological square for analyzing the direct utterances of politicians published as news reports and disseminated to the public via social media platforms. Through the analysis of the two news reports, the results indicate that the highest frequency of processes is observed in the material process category, with a total of 8 occurrences, accounting for (61.5%) of all identified processes. This indicates that the discourse primarily focuses on actions and events related to water management and allocation. Such prominence suggests that the political dialogue is heavily centered on concrete actions, such as requests for water releases and discussions about dam projects, which are critical in the context of resource disputes. In terms of processes that fall within the average range, the verbal processes, totaling 4 occurrences (30.8%), effectively illustrate the importance of communication and dialogue in addressing the water crisis. This reflects the necessity for politicians to articulate their positions and negotiate with other stakeholders. In contrast, the lowest frequency is found in the mental process, with only one occurrence, accounting for (7.7%). This under-representation suggests that the ideological and cognitive dimensions of the dialogue are less emphasized than the actionable aspects of water management. These findings are consistent with Van Dijk's (2000) ideological square, where politicians emphasize the positive aspects of their own group while minimizing their flaws and highlighting the negative aspects of the opposing group. Although this study is limited in scope, analyzing only two reports, it offers significant insight into how discourse functions ideologically in the context of resource conflicts. Future studies could extend this analysis to

incorporate visual and multimedia elements of news reports, such as images and videos, to explore how they contribute to ideological framing.

Conclusion

Analyzing the selected news reports in the context of the water war reveals significant ideological representations embedded in the language of politicians. Utilizing Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model and Van Dijk's (2000) ideological square, it becomes evident that politicians strategically employ linguistic processes to construct the ideological representations of in-groups and out-groups. The findings highlight a predominant focus on material processes, indicating a strong emphasis on actions and decisions related to water management. Furthermore, the findings showed that Iraqi and Turkish politicians construct ideological representations by emphasizing the positive aspects of their group while minimizing their flaws and highlighting the negative aspects of the opposing group. These insights highlight the crucial role of discourse in shaping public perceptions and political narratives, underscoring the importance of more equitable and transparent communication in managing water conflicts. Future research should focus on multimodal discourse analysis, incorporating visual and multimedia elements of news reports (e.g., images and videos) to explore how they contribute to ideological framing.

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